

Message Text

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12
ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 H-02 AID-05 SR-02

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R 170200Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9918
INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
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COMSEVENTHFLT

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, OVIS, VS, MY
SUBJ: REPORT OF OWNER US-FLAG LCU "YFU-69"

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 2682 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY MAY 14 DEBRIEFED O. KELLEY SHELTON ONE OF THE OWNERS OF THE LCU YFU-69 WHICH IS CURRENTLY BEING HELD IN KUALA TRENGGANU BY MALAYSIA AUTHORITIES PENDING DISPOSITION OF CASES OF VIETNAMESE MASTER AND HIS FAMILY AND OF TAIWANESE LUT ON BOARD WITH HIS VIETNAMESE FAMILY BY MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES IN PULAU PERHENTIAN (REFTEL). WHEN THESE PROBLEMS SOLVED SHELTON PLANS SAIL LCU TO SINGAPORE FOR REGISTRATION UNDER PANAMA FLAG IN HOPES OF GETTING WORK WITH OFFSHORE PETROLEUM COMPANY THERE. SHELTON'S SHIP, OWNED BY SOUS LA MER CO. SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, WAS OPERATING OFF COAST OF VIETNAM UNDER USAID CONTRACT UNTIL FALL OF SAIGON. SHELTON HAS GIVEN US OUR FIRST DIRECT REPORT OF PULAU PERHENTIAN WHERE GOM HAS CONCENTRATED OVER ONE THOUSAND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WHO HAVE REACHED EAST COAST OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA BY SEA. END SUMMARY.

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2. LCU LEFT SHIP CONCENTRATION AREA OFF VUNG TAU ON

MAY 1 WHEN U.S. VESSELS STEAMED AWAY. EN ROUTE SOUTHWEST FROM VIETNAM TO PENINSULAR MALAYSIAN EAST COAST, SHELTON ENCOUNTERED 35-40 FOOT FISHERMAN (HULL NO. VT-2491) WITH TWENTY PLUS MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ON BOARD AS WELL AS CREW OF THREE YOUNG FISHERMEN. AMONG GROUP WERE MRS. CHUNG BACH VAN, WIFE OF 25TH DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL LY TONG BA WHO REPORTEDLY COMMITTED SUICIDE DURING SAIGON'S FALL, HIS CHILDREN AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS. GROUP HAD HIRED FISHERMEN TO TAKE THEM TO U.S. VESSELS BUT HAD MISSED THEM AND WERE WITHOUT FOOD AND WATER. LCU TOOK BOAT IN TOW AND ON EVENING OF MAY 6 ARRIVED OFF TUMPAT ON KELANTAN (NORTHEAST MALAY PENINSULAR) COAST. FOLLOWING MORNING, MALAYSIAN PATROL BOAT APPROACHED, ASCERTAINED THEIR SITUATION AND ESCORTED THEM TO PULAU PERHENTIAN (ISLAND OFF EAST COAST OF MALAY PENINSULA WHERE GOM CONCENTRATING INDOCHINA REFUGEES). FISHING BOAT WAS SENT TO BEACH WITH VIETNAMESE AND LCU ANCHORED OFFSHORE. FISHERMEN WERE NOT ALLOWED TO RETURN TO VIETNAM WITH THEIR BOAT AS THEY WANTED TO DO.

3. THERE WERE TWO VIETNAMESE NAVY CRAFT AT PULAU PERHENTIAN, AN LCU WITH WHEELHOUSE DAMAGED WHERE A HELICOPTER HAD CRASHED INTO IT AND AN LCM-8.

4. MEETING OF MAY 8, SHELTON WAS TAKEN TO POLICE BOAT WHERE HE WAS TOLD HE WAS NOT REPEAT NOT UNDER ARREST. SINCE DESTINATION WAS SINGAPORE AND LCU WAS AMERICAN FLAG VESSEL POLICE ESCORTED HIM TO PORT OF KUALA TRENGGANU. AT THAT TIME, SENIOR POLICE OFFICER ASKED THEM TO TAKE FROM PULAU PERHENTIAN TAIWANESE AND HIS FAMILY WHOM SHELTON HAD KNOWN VAGUELY IN VIETNAM. SHELTON AGREED AS HE THOUGHT THEY WERE ALL DOCUMENTED AS ROC CITIZENS. HE LEARNED AFTER THEY WERE ABOARD THAT ONLY HUSBAND HAD ROC PASSPORT WHILE WIFE WAS VIETNAMESE AND CHILDREN UNDOCUMENTED.

5. SHELTON REPORTED THAT THROUGH BINOCULARS HE COULD SEE SHORE CLEARLY WHERE THERE ARE ONLY FOUR OR FIVE GRASS BUILDINGS OR SHACKS. HE SAW PEOPLE PUTTING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UP BLANKETS AND OTHER BITS FOR SHELTER. POLICE TOLD HIM PROVISIONS WERE NOT ADEQUATE AND THIS WAS CONFIRMED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH OFFICER-IN-CHARGE (OCP) POLICE TRENGGANU, THE SENIOR POLICEMAN IN THE STATE. SHELTON SAID THE OCP WRYLY REMARKED THAT THE MALAYSIANS WERE PRETENDING THE REFUGEES WEREN'T THERE. THE OCP'S WIFE AND OTHER OFFICIAL LADIES WERE GATHERING OLD CLOTHES TO DONATE TO THE REFUGEES. WHILE THERE,

SHELTON DID NOT ENCOUNTER ANY REPRESENTATIVE OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES OR OF THE MALAYSIAN RED CROSS BUT WAS TOLD SOME OF THE SUPPLIES FOR THE REFUGEES HAD COME FROM THE LATTER.

6. WHEN SHELTON REACHED KUALA TRENGGANU MAY 9, HE WAS NOT PERMITTED TO TELEPHONE OR TO LEAVE THE SHIP AS HE HAD BEEN PROMISED BY POLICE ON PULAU PERHENTIAN. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY WAS INFORMED OF HIS ARRIVAL BY MFA, POLICE FIRST DENIED HE WAS THERE AND THEN SAID HE WAS HELD ON SHIP BY ORDER OF MALAYSIAN NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. SHELTON DID SUCCEED IN MAKING ONE TELEPHONE CALL TO HIS BROTHER IN KUALA LUMPUR FROM SHELL OIL COMPANY PIER WHERE HIS SHIP IS BERTHED. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS EMBASSY WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE GOM FEARED SHELTON WOULD GO OFF AND LEAVE THEM WITH REFUGEES AND CREW SO ASSURANCES WERE GIVEN THAT HE WOULD RETURN TO HIS LCU. SUBSEQUENT ACTION REGARDING TAIWAN REFUGEE FAMILY AND LCU'S VIETNAMESE CAPTAIN AND FAMILY HAVE BEEN REPORTED SEPTTEL. UNDERHILL

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